

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 1995 SESSION

CHAPTER 196

An Act to amend and reenact § 4.1-338 of the Code of Virginia, relating to disposition of forfeited items.

[S 1090]

Approved March 14, 1995

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 4.1-338 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 4.1-338. Confiscation proceedings; disposition of forfeited articles.

A. All proceedings for the confiscation of articles, except motor vehicles, declared contraband and forfeited to the Commonwealth under this chapter shall be as provided in this section.

B. Production of seized property. - Whenever any article declared contraband under the provisions of this title and required to be forfeited to the Commonwealth has been seized, with or without a warrant, by any officer charged with the enforcement of this title, he shall produce the contraband article and any person in whose possession it was found. In those cases where no person is found in possession of such articles the return shall so state and a copy of the warrant shall be posted on the door of the buildings or room where the articles were found, or if there is no door, then in any conspicuous place upon the premises.

In case of seizure of a still, doubler, worm, worm tub, mash tub, fermenting tub, or other distilling apparatus, for any offense involving their forfeiture, where it is impracticable to remove such distilling apparatus to a place of safe storage from the place where seized, the seizing officer may destroy such apparatus only as necessary to prevent use of all or any part thereof for the purpose of distilling. The destruction shall be in the presence of at least one credible witness, and such witness shall join the officer in a sworn report of the seizure and destruction, to be made to the Board. The report shall set forth the grounds of the claim of forfeiture, the reasons for seizure and destruction, an estimate of the fair cash value of the apparatus destroyed, and the materials remaining after such destruction. The report shall include a statement that, from facts within their own knowledge, the seizing officer and witness have no doubt whatever that the distilling apparatus was set up for use, or had been used in the unlawful distillation of spirits, and that it was impracticable to remove such apparatus to a place of safe storage.

In case of seizure of any quantity of mash, or of alcoholic beverages on which the tax imposed by the laws of the United States has not been paid, for any offense involving forfeiture of the same, the seizing officer may destroy them to prevent the use of all or any part thereof for the purpose of unlawful distillation of spirits or any other violation of this title. The destruction shall be in the presence of at least one credible witness, and such witness shall join the officer in a sworn report of the seizure and destruction, to be made to the Board. The report shall set forth the grounds of the claim of forfeiture, the reasons for seizure and destruction, and a statement that, from facts within their own knowledge, the seizing officer and witness have no doubt whatever that the mash was intended for use in the unlawful distillation of spirits, or that the alcoholic beverages were intended for use in violation of this title.

C. Hearing and determination. - Upon the return of the warrant as provided in this section, the court shall fix a time not less than ten days, unless waived by the accused in writing, and not more than thirty days thereafter, for the hearing on such return to determine whether or not the articles seized, or any part thereof, were used or in any manner kept, stored or possessed in violation of this title.

At such hearing if no claimant appears, the court shall declare the articles seized forfeited to the Commonwealth and, if such articles are not necessary as evidence in any pending prosecution, shall turn them over to the Board. Any person claiming an interest in any of the articles seized may appear at the hearing and file a written claim setting forth particularly the character and extent of his interest. The court shall certify the warrant and the articles seized along with any claim filed to the circuit court to hear and determine the validity of such claim.

If the evidence warrants, the court shall enter a judgment of forfeiture and order the articles seized to be turned over to the Board. Action under this section and the forfeiture of any articles hereunder shall not be a bar to any prosecution under any other provision of this title.

D. Disposition of forfeited beverages and other articles. - Any articles forfeited to the Commonwealth and turned over to the Board in accordance with this section shall be destroyed or sold by the Board as it deems proper. The net proceeds from such sales shall be paid into the Literary Fund. If the Board believes that any alcoholic beverages forfeited to the Commonwealth and turned over to the Board in accordance with this section cannot be sold and should not be destroyed, it may give such alcoholic beverages for medicinal purposes to any institution in the Commonwealth regularly conducted as a

hospital, nursing home or sanatorium for the care of persons in ill health, or as a home devoted exclusively to the care of aged people, to supply the needs of such institution for alcoholic beverages for such purposes, provided that (i) the State Health Commissioner has issued a certificate stating that such institution has need for such alcoholic beverages and (ii) preference is accorded by the Board to institutions supported either in whole or in part by public funds. A record shall be made showing the amount issued in each case, to whom issued and the date when issued, and shall be kept in the offices of the State Health Commissioner and the Board. No charge shall be made to any patient for the alcoholic beverages supplied to him where they have been received from the Board pursuant to this section. Such alcoholic beverages shall be administered only upon approval of the patient's physician.

If the Board believes that any foodstuffs forfeited to the Commonwealth and turned over to the Board in accordance with this section are usable, should not be destroyed and cannot be sold or whose sale would be impractical, it may give such foodstuffs to any institution in the Commonwealth and shall prefer a gift to the local jail or other local correctional facility in the jurisdiction where seizure took place. A record shall be made showing the nature of the foodstuffs and amount given, to whom given and the date when given, and shall be kept in the offices of the Board.